
PHILIPS' "NEW PROSPECT" READERS

General Editor : ERNEST YOUNG, B.Sc.

LIFE OVERSEAS

CANADA

GILMOUR AND YOUNG



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EDITED BY
COPY

ERNEST YOUNG

AND

SAMUEL CARTER GILMOUR



CUTTING WHEAT ON THE PRAIRIES

LONDON

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PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

THIS little book does not pretend to be a complete Geography of Canada. In particular, all account of Canadian manufactures, which are now of considerable importance, and of life in cities, is purposely omitted. We have confined ourselves mainly to occupations which provide the basis of most of the important Canadian manufactures, or which tend to bring out the physical features of the country.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the London Offices of the Canadian Government, the British Columbian Government, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian National Railways, and the Hudson's Bay Company for many of the illustrations in this book.

We are especially indebted to Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the well-known Arctic explorer, for placing at our disposal his intimate knowledge of Northernmost Canada, enabling us in the first chapter to correct some popular misconceptions of life in the Far North.

E. Y.; S. C. G.

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LIFE OVERSEAS

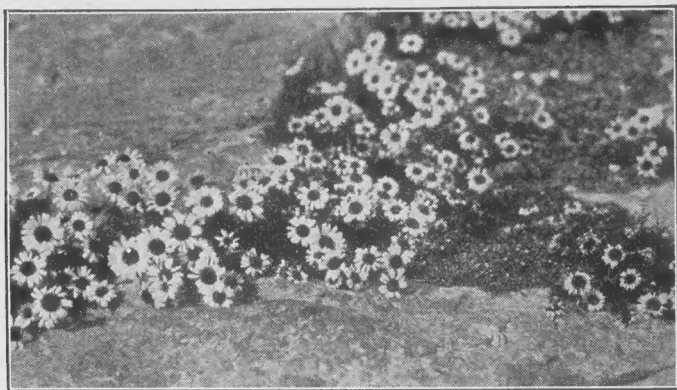
CANADA

I.—LIFE IN THE FAR NORTH

ALONG the farthest northern shores of all the northern continents there lies a belt of country where, as a rule, trees do not grow. In sheltered spots or on the shores of lakes there may be found clumps of trees, some of them as large as two feet in diameter. But for the most part the land bordering the Arctic Ocean is treeless.

In Europe and Asia, and sometimes in Canada too, the treeless North is called "tundra." In Canada the old name for it was "the Barren Grounds," and people thought of it as a frozen desert; in recent years it has become known as the land of Arctic prairies, or pastures. Certainly it is not a barren land, though it looks like one for many months in the year.

In winter, when most of the land is hidden under snow, when lakes and rivers are covered thickly with ice, and when the lonely waste is swept by bitter blasts, the Canadian tundra does indeed seem to be a frozen desert. But in summer the snows melt, the swamps thaw, the ice-crowned



SUMMER IN THE FAR NORTH : THE ARCTIC DAISY

By courtesy of the High Commissioner for Canada

tyrant ceases to reign, and much of the tundra becomes a flower-decked prairie.

Plants grow so rapidly in the long summer days that leaf, bud, flower and seed follow each other in quick succession. There are at least three hundred different varieties of flowering plants, as well as three hundred kinds of lichens, two hundred kinds of mosses, and large numbers of berries that are very good to eat. Everywhere the land is a-bloom and radiant with colour—lilac and bronze, crimson and green, purple and gold.

A foot or two below the surface the ground is everlastingly frozen ; only the upper layer is thawed by the summer sun. In thousands of little pools of water, as also in the unlocked lakes and rivers, millions of mosquitoes breed, to rise

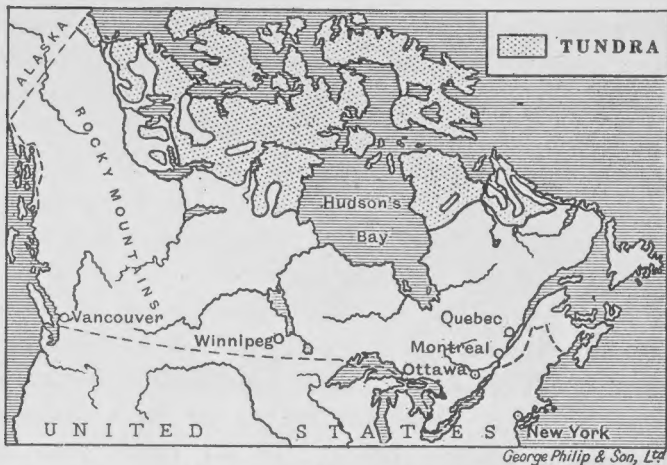
like a mist into the sunlight, ready to sting and stab, mad for the blood of any man and almost any beast, except frogs. Water attracts large numbers of wild-fowl, and as soon as the call of the northern summer is heard the sky is darkened by enormous flights of snow-geese and different kinds of ducks, with eagles and hawks in close attendance, seeking their prey.

The desolation of the winter cold and the stinging torment of the mosquitoes in summer make the Canadian tundra a difficult country in which to live. One may travel for days without meeting a human being. In all these tens of thousands of square miles there are just a few scattered Indian tribes, who depend on the caribou, or wild reindeer, for a living, and a few Eskimos, who live mainly along the coast and depend mainly on the sea. Between the two races there is great hostility, and as a rule each avoids the land where the other roams.

CHRISTMAS MAIL AT A SETTLEMENT ON HUDSON'S BAY

By courtesy of the Canadian National Railways





MAP OF CANADA SHOWING THE TUNDRA ZONE

From the sea the coast Eskimo obtains almost everything that makes life possible—fish, walrus and seal. The seal provides him with food, oil for his stove, clothes, tents, buckets, and a cover for the framework of his canoe, though in these days some of the Eskimos also own motor-boats and small ships, and enjoy many of the comforts of civilization.

The only domestic animal is the dog or husky. In Labrador this is a big, wolf-like animal, with a savage temper. The Eskimo dog is smaller, and, if treated kindly, is a faithful, friendly creature. The Eskimos use it as a beast of burden. It is harnessed to wooden sledges provided with bone-plated runners, and sometimes drags huge piles of walrus or seal meat for a long distance.

It is also a hunting or fishing dog, will chase caribou, attack a bear, and, when the water is not too cold, will swim and dive for fish. It is a hardy beast, that scorns the shelter of hut or tent and sleeps out in the open on the coldest nights.

The home of the Eskimo changes with the season; in the summer it is a tent, in the winter it may be any one of several kinds of dwellings. Sometimes it is a snow-house, or a stone hut whose chinks are filled with earth. Often it has a wooden framework, made of drift-wood or of trees felled in some not too distant patch of

forest; and this framework is covered with earth or sods. Nowadays, in a growing number of cases, it is a factory-made frame house—that is, a wooden house that has been brought in sections from the cities of the south. Most of the pictures of Eskimos show them living in the bowl-shaped snow-house, but many Eskimos have never even seen a snow-house. They are no longer a people



ESKIMO WOMAN AND CHILDREN

*By courtesy of the High Commissioner
for Canada*

cut off from the rest of the world, and knowing nothing of its ways. They now have wireless sets and gramophones on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, and in the winter they have merry times, with wireless concerts and dances

In summer, some Eskimos travel inland to pick berries and shoot caribou, whose meat can



A CARIBOU—THE REINDEER OF NORTH
AMERICA

be dried and kept for winter use. To some of the seal-hunters of the shore the caribou is a useful and pleasant "extra"; to the wandering North-land Indians it is the mainstay of life, providing food and clothing and something to sell. From the hide are made

long cloaks (*capotes*), mittens, moccasins, laces and string, and all that is left over, be it skin or meat, can be bartered with the man who keeps the store at the nearest trading station of the Hudson's Bay Company. This great company has many stations scattered through the Canadian North-West. It was founded as long ago as 1670, to carry on trade in the country around Hudson's Bay, and

its stores are still the only centres of civilization known to many of the people of the vast North Land.

The caribou is a migrating animal about whose movements there has been much discussion. It is now known that caribou do not move about according to any fixed rules. Though we should expect them to go south in the winter and north in the summer, they sometimes do quite the opposite.

The caribou can swim as well as walk, and on the Yukon River a migrating herd has been known to hold up a steamer, so numerous were the deer and so closely were they packed in the water.

Wherever the caribou go, big grey or black or white wolves follow,* ready to attack and eat any member of the herd who falls out through old age, sickness or laziness. The caribou move so swiftly that, in open chase, the wolf has no chance of catching them; but the wolf is more cunning than the caribou, and will sometimes sneak this way and that, driving the herd forward towards rocks and precipices over which some of the hunted beasts are sure to fall.

Sometimes the caribou, though not killed by the fall, will break a leg, in which case it knows that

* Black wolves are not really black, and white wolves are not really white. These names are used to describe animals that are simply darker or lighter than the ordinary grey wolf.

the only hope of escape is to reach the water, where its wonderful swimming powers make it so safe that the enemy gives up the chase. Then, on some lonely island, the crippled deer rests in peace until its leg is healed, or it may be, in some cases, till the lake once more freezes over and



A MUSK-OX

again puts it at the mercy of its foe.

Almost as plentiful as the caribou and its pursuer, the wolf, are the rabbit and its pursuers, the lynx, wolf, and fox. But the most remarkable animal in this

astonishing land is the musk-ox, which is so named because it has a musky smell and looks something like an ox. In some ways it is also like a sheep. It is a stoutly built animal, with short legs and a covering of brown hair that reaches nearly to the ground. Beneath the hair is a thick layer of fine wool that is shed in summer.

For a delightful account of the Eskimo dog and much information about Eskimo life, see "The Story of One Ear," by Alan Sullivan (George Philip & Son, Limited).



II.—LIFE IN THE FOREST

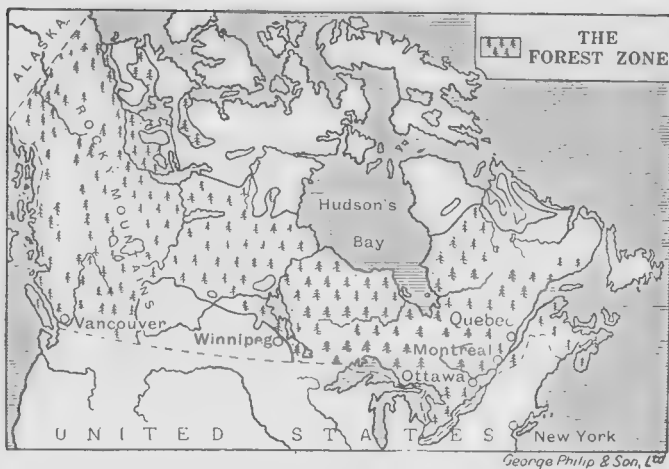
(a) *Lumbering*

SOUTH of the treeless North lies a wide belt of shady darkness, mystery and silence, the biggest forest in the world, stretching east and west across the whole of Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

Here are mossy carpets, better
Than the Persian weaves,
And than Eastern perfumes sweeter
Seem the fading leaves ;
And a music wild and solemn,
From the pine-tree's height,
Rolls its vast and sea-like volume
On the wind of night.*

To this wild world of stately pine and spruce and fir men come, at certain seasons of the year, to fell the trees or trap the furry beasts that haunt its quiet shades. It is, however, only in those parts of the forest where there are railway or motor-tractor routes, or streams to float the

* "The Lumbermen" (Whittier).



MAP OF CANADA SHOWING THE NATURAL FOREST ZONE

(Large tracts of land in the Forest Zone, as here shown, have been cleared for settlement.)

timber to saw-mills or to ships, that lumbering is an important occupation. Hence, in Canada, the chief lumber areas are either in the east (in Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) or in the west (in British Columbia).

Life in a lumber camp is everywhere much the same, except that in British Columbia, near the coast, the winters are mild, the streams unfrozen, and work is carried on all the year round. The following account deals with the east of Canada, where lumbering is still mainly a winter occupation.

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Twang! Clang! Clang! It is a cold, dark

winter morning and the sun has not yet risen. Cookie, the most important man in the camp, is pounding away with a bar of iron on a steel triangle that hangs outside the long, low log-building where the men are sleeping.

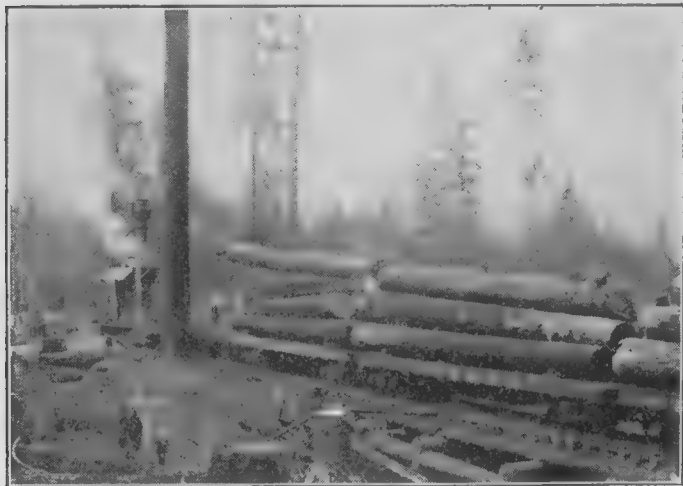
“Roll out there! Roll out!” roars the deep voice of the “boss,” and one by one the men obey the call, roll out and dress. They wear thick, warm “mackinaw” coats and trousers—made of a heavy blanket-like cloth, usually woven in a large plaid design—and high logging boots, with quarter-inch spikes on soles and heels. Only half awake, the men stumble out into the darkness, rouse themselves to life with a wash in stinging ice-cold water that sets the blood afire and the nerves a-tingle, and then, with much more haste and interest, make tracks for breakfast.

Breakfast is a serious business, and the lumber-jack, who believes in doing only one thing at a time and doing it well, settles down to the meal without much talking. It would be folly to waste time in speech when in front of him are mush (porridge), bacon and eggs, hot buttered toast, maple syrup, pancakes, fruit, and tea with plenty of sugar in it. Soon the plates are empty, the piles of provisions have melted away like snow in sunshine, and everybody is ready for the work of the day.

As a rule the men are divided into gangs, each with its own “boss” and its own special kind of work. The best men are the axe-men, who fell the

trees and cut them into logs, and they choose their axes with as much care as a cricketer chooses his bat before he takes the field. Years of practice are needed in order to learn to swing the axe correctly, to gauge the exact distance at which to stand before striking the tree, to know just how much cutting is needed to fell the forest giant, and the precise moment at which to spring clear as the great trunk crashes its way to earth.

Another gang of men will drag the logs to a point where they can be hitched to motor tractors or loaded on to trucks, running on rails which have been roughly laid for the purpose. If there are no tractors or rails, the teamsters will have to take



LOADING LOGS

By courtesy of the Canadian National Railways

charge of the logs and haul them to a river or lake. These teamsters know their horses as a mother knows her children, and guide them by sound rather than by whip or rein ; a team and its driver work together like a football captain and his side.

There are other gangs who will spend the day making roads over the frozen snow and clearing the way for those who drag the logs ; and there are the "coasters" who bring, on large sleighs drawn by motor tractors or by teams of heavy horses, supplies from some store-house that may be sixty or seventy miles away.

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Dusk falls and the men come tramping home again, glad enough to catch sight of bright lights shining through the sombre trees. A few minutes more and they have passed through the forest shades into the little clearing where stands the camp, a collection of roughly built wooden shacks that may, if it be a big one, include a bunk-house, a cook-house, barns, offices, stables and store-house. The resinous smell of freshly cut wood and the hard work in the cold fresh air have sharpened the appetites so much that the men are quite ready for their supper of fresh bread, baked pork and beans, molasses, rice, and very sugary tea. The meal is soon over, and the men stroll off to the bunk-house, or perhaps remain to sleep in the room where the meals have been served.

The bunks are built in double rows, one above the other, like those in a ship. Some of the men sit on the benches that run down the middle or side of the room. At the far end a large group gathers round the cheerful stove, smoking and talking. In a corner of the room one man strikes up a tune on a mouth organ, and some of his companions dance gaily to the music. For the most part, however, the men are too tired to do anything but loll about, gaze at the fire, and talk in disconnected grunts.

The air is thick with tobacco fumes mingled with the steam from woollen socks and sweaters that are hanging up to dry. Presently, one by one, the men make for their berths and turn in to rest. Soon the last of them is tucked up under his blanket, and speech is over till the morning clanging of the cook shall once more awaken the camp to life and labour.

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Felling and sawing the timber goes on as long as the swampy ground is frozen hard and covered with snow, so that the logs can be dragged easily from place to place. In spring, when the approach of warmer days melts the snow and unlocks the water, some of the lumbermen return to the saw-mills or to their farms, but the rest prepare for the exciting business of driving the logs downstream.

Imagine a bright spring morning, the air still with a nip in it and the ground still hard with frost, crunching under the feet of the last dwellers



IN A CANADIAN FOREST

By courtesy of the Agent-General for British Columbia

in the camp as they march, cheerfully singing snatches of old songs, to the spot where the logs have been piled.

The first business is to roll the logs into the stream with the help of tools called *peavies*. A peavy is a big stout stick of ash or oak, with a heavy steel spike at the bottom and a hook with a sharp bill on it about a foot from the spike. Once the logs are in the water, they may either be floated loose or, if the stream be wide, tied together to form rafts, which, however, must be untied where the river flows in rapids.

Very soon the rushing flood is filled with a swirling mass of logs and tree-trunks, tossing and

pitching about like corks as they are borne downstream towards the saw-mills. In the rapids a log will sometimes hit a sunken rock, turn sideways, catch the rest as they come tearing madly along, and cause them to pile up one on top of another till a jam is formed.

“Look out, boys, there’s a jam!”

Out run the drivers, springing from log to log amidst the foaming waters, trying to find and set free the log that started the mischief. Presently some one finds it and works it loose, and then the whole mass begins to move again.

“Look out, boys! She’s coming! Beat it!” yells an old driver, and back they come, springing lightly from log to log, never putting more



LOG DRIVING ON A RIVER IN EASTERN CANADA

By courtesy of the Canadian National Railways

than one foot at a time on one that is moving, and holding their peavies out horizontally in front of them after the manner of an acrobat walking a tight-rope. It is a life and death race, for most of the drivers cannot swim, and if they could they would stand but little chance against the rushing river and the tossing torrent of logs.

Sometimes a driver is stranded on a log, caught in a breaking jam, and left without any means of reaching the shore. His only hope is usually to look out for a bigger log, hop on to it, and float on through the tumbling billows of the rapid till he reaches another jam, perhaps far down the stream, whence he can make his way to land. Sometimes he may be rescued by a *Dumas*, that is, two logs roped together in the form of a raft and manned by a few men armed with pike poles.

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In a land covered with forest there is no room for the farmer till the lumberer has cleared the ground. Till then its dark depths and entangling glades shelter merely a handful of hunters, trappers and fishers. It is the lumberer who prepares the way for the settler :

Loud behind us grow the murmurs
Of the age to come ;
Clang of smiths, and tread of farmers,
Bearing harvest home !
Here her virgin lap with treasures
Shall the green earth fill ;
Waving wheat and golden maize-ears
Crown each beechen hill.

“ The Lumbermen ” (Whittier).



A SILVER BLACK
FOX

*By courtesy of the
High Commissioner
for Canada*

III.—LIFE IN THE FOREST

(b) Trapping

IN recent years there has grown up in Canada a new industry known as “fur farming.” In every province there are large numbers of “farms” or “ranches” where fur-bearing animals of one kind or another are reared for the sake of their pelts. But there are still many men who make a business of trapping the little furry beasts in their wild haunts.

When the chill winds of winter wail and moan amongst the plumes of the pointed firs, and the ermine, sable, fox, mink, beaver and other fur-bearing animals are in prime coat, the trapper, armed with axe, hunting knife in belt, and gun on shoulder, makes his appearance in the lonely woods. He is a tall, muscular figure, who, to protect himself from the cold, wears a heavy fur or leather coat, a close-fitting fur cap pulled well

down over his ears, blue cloth leggings, large moccasins, two or three pairs of blanket socks, and deerskin mittens.

His headquarters is a small log cabin or "shack," roofed with bark and split logs, and with all its holes and cracks filled with clay or moss. In the middle is a rough log table; in one corner a pile of rugs and furs that serves as a bed; in another an earthenware basin and jug, and perhaps, nailed on the wall, a looking-glass. From this shack lead the trails along which the hunter sets his traps. As the trails may each be ten or fifteen miles in length, it often happens that he must spend the night in the open, with no shelter from the icy winds except that which he can fashion for himself.

This is usually a low framework of poles, covered with the bark of the spruce. One side of the shelter is left open, and in front of the opening is built a log fire. Sometimes, however, the trapper may have to content himself with clearing a hole in the snow, lighting a fire, and then, in the red and vivid glow of a flaming torch of pine, settling down under a bundle of skins, his dog, maybe, pressed close to his side, until the gloomy shadows fly with the coming of another morn.

A really good trapper may have, in all, close on forty miles of trail, and will usually visit each of his traps at least once a week to bring home his catch and reset the traps with fresh bait. He walks on long strips of wood called skis (*shees*),

or on snow-shoes shaped something like the wide part of a tennis racquet, and as he moves across the deep snow with long, firm, regular steps the sharp twang of the shoe springing beneath his feet is the only sound he hears, except, perhaps, the whisper of the pines as they bend backwards and forwards in the breeze.

He winds his way beneath the forest arches, between the trunks of majestic trees, over fallen stem and mossy stone, through tangled mazes of smaller bushes, going swiftly forward for miles in places where there is neither trail nor track, as sure of his way as if he were treading the broad roads of a city. Behind him he drags a small hand-sledge, a flat slip of wood five or six feet long and one foot wide, turned up at one end, on which he loads the animals that are caught in his traps.

He may, at times, have with him a dog, useful both as a draught animal and as a companion. These dogs, if the sledges are properly packed, can drag heavier loads in proportion to their weight than any other four-footed animal.

As the trapper glides over the snow, he scans the surface with the clear eyes of one who is used to the open air, looking for newly made tracks. Suddenly a noise makes him stop to listen, and the smile that spreads over his face is a sign that some animal or other has been caught in the snare. Ten minutes is all the time he needs to kill his prey by hitting it on the nose with the handle of

his axe, reset the trap and cover it with snow in such a way as to hide its presence, strap the dead body to the sledge, and be off again, following the trail that may lead to another prize.

Different kinds of traps are used to catch different kinds of animals. Some of them are arranged so that a heavy log falls on the animal and kills it as it seizes the bait. Others only grip and crush a limb. Then the torn flesh freezes quickly in the intense cold, and if the trapper is long in coming, death by freezing will usually end the sufferings of the little creature.

Sometimes the trapper is forestalled. A wolverine—a clumsy, heavily built animal with short,

A BEAVER—THE LUMBERMAN OF THE ANIMAL WORLD

By courtesy of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company



thick limbs and powerful claws—may visit the trap and steal the bait, or even eat the animal that has been caught. Wolverines are among the trapper's greatest enemies, for they have huge appetites, are skilful robbers of traps, and are so wily that it is almost impossible to catch them.

The life of the trapper is hard, lonely and dangerous, though the danger does not usually come from the small creatures that he seeks. If, however, they have their little ones with them, even the smallest animals become fierce. The weasel, for instance, a very little creature, is able to overcome an animal nearly twice its own size, and has been known, in defence of its young, to attack and kill a man.

Accidents sometimes happen that no amount of care can prevent. A man named Dan McKinnon, trapping in some densely wooded country, was so bothered by wolves that robbed him of his trap lines that he was forced to leave the district. For a hundred and fifty miles he tramped, till, almost at his last gasp, he reached a post of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. With the aid of the police he moved on before the snow had all disappeared, and began work again on new ground. Here he was fairly successful; in due time he packed the beaver skins he had obtained on the backs of three dogs and set off on foot to make the long trek home.

Two days after he started the dogs gave chase



" THE DOGS GAVE CHASE TO A MOOSE "

to a moose and disappeared, taking with them all the pelts, and, worse still, the greater part of Dan's food. For ten weary days the trapper managed to live, mainly on what he could shoot with his rifle, but by the time he was once more within reach of human help his clothes were in rags and he was half dead from starvation.

The actual trapping season lasts only from October to May. As soon as the ice begins to melt, the snows to thaw and the earth to soften, the trapper sets off to carry his furs to one of the stations belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. Transport in winter is mostly by dog-drawn sledges over snow and ice, in summer by boats on water ; but the routes are much the same what-

ever the season—up the rivers and across the lakes.

By sledge or canoe, motor-boat or even aeroplane, the furs arrive at last at some post belonging, perhaps, to the Hudson's Bay Company. Some of these posts look to-day as they did two hundred years ago. There may be a dozen wooden houses and a store. The store has an upper room in which are hanging thousands of furs of white fox, marten, musquash, beaver and other animals, and a lower room where the Company keeps a kind of shop. Close by is the office.

Presently an Indian trapper enters the shop and throws down his bundle of furs in front of the low wooden counter. The manager looks it over with a quick but skilful glance, throws aside one or more furs that are not "prime," and gives the trapper a note stating the value of the rest. This note can be exchanged for cash or for one or more of the things that the store contains and the Indian wants—fish-hooks, knives, gunpowder, cartridges, guns, blankets, sewing-machines, gramophones and provisions.

For a mile or more along the river bank are dotted the wigwams of the Indians who have come to sell their furs and obtain their winter supplies. They are there only for the summer, and as soon as autumn calls they will depart once more, to follow the trail by pine-clad ridge and forest stream to their far-away trapping grounds in the lands of silence.

IV.—LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

(a) *At Home*

Oh, there's nothing like the prairie
When the wind is in your face,
And the boom of distant thunder
Comes rolling up apace—
'Tis then you feel the wonder
And immensity of space ! *

THE prairies, before man came to till them, were just a wide ocean of grass in the heart of the continent, not everywhere flat, but billowy, and broken here and there by chains of low hills.

Lo, they stretch
In airy undulations far away,
As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,
Stood still with all his rounded billows fixed
And motionless for ever.†

Into this wide, empty land came settlers from all parts of the earth to cultivate the ground, and now, in summer, there is not only pastureland, but a broad mantle of golden grain, through which the whispering rivers journey downwards to the gateways of the sea. In winter the surface is in most parts a sheet of hard, sparkling whiteness.

The new settler's home is often just a little factory-made frame house or a one-roomed shack built by himself out of logs, sods and building paper, very plain and with few luxuries in the

* "On the Trail" (Helena Coleman).

† "The Prairies" (Bryant).



A SHACK BUILT WITH POPLAR LOGS

By courtesy of the Canadian Pacific Railway

way of pictures or furniture. In his single room he cooks, eats, does his washing and sleeps, and keeps his stove alight all through the winter.

Such a home is only a beginning. The man with grit and brains and good health can look forward to building himself something better than a shack, and it is with the home of a settler who has "made good" that this chapter deals.

The house is still of wood, but has a good, strong waterproof foundation of cement. The walls are wooden frames, covered on both sides with felt paper and match-boarding to keep out the winter cold. Water is drawn from a well by means of a small gasoline engine and pumped up into a storage tank at the top of the house. Some of the more up-to-date farms have power from huge central electric stations built at waterfalls,

others have their own electric light plant, the power being generated by the breezes and stored in batteries ; others, again, have gas laid on from supplies of natural gas which are found in parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan ; but most of them still use oil lamps.

The inside of the house is much the same as that occupied by an English farmer, except that the rooms are fewer and larger and are generally divided from each other, not by doors, but by curtained arches, so as to allow the air to circulate freely both in summer and in winter. In summer this helps to keep the house cool ; in winter the air in all the rooms is warmed by central heating. The heating stove is in the "basement," which is not underground like the basement of an English house, but is a large room extending over the whole site of the house on the ground level ; we should call it the ground floor. This basement is also used as a store-room and laundry, and the children often play there. The living-rooms are above it, and are reached from outside by a broad flight of steps leading from the ground to a long veranda, which stretches along the front (and sometimes the sides) of the house. Inside, on this upper floor, are generally the bedrooms as well as the living-rooms, though in big houses there may be one or two more floors with bedrooms.

The principal room is the kitchen, which is often also the dining-room and living-room, even



A MARRIED SETTLER'S FIRST HOME

By courtesy of the High Commissioner for Canada

when there are other rooms that could be used for these purposes. The kitchen is large, light and airy, and it is here that the farmer and his family and the men have their meals.

Let us take a peep at such a home, in which live a farmer and his wife with their three children—Bobbie and Jack and a baby girl.

It is a fresh, cool morning in early spring. The sun has not yet fully risen, but the air is clear and it is possible to see for miles across the vast undulating prairie. At intervals are long, broad patches of rich, dark earth, lined with straight furrows that stretch for half a mile and even more.

The farmer's wife is already astir, preparing breakfast, for the farmer is anxious that his seed



THE HOME OF A SETTLER WHO HAS "MADE GOOD"

By courtesy of the High Commissioner for Canada

shall be in the ground as soon as possible. However hard his task may be, that of his wife is harder. She has to do all the work of the house herself, with the help of the children, who in Canada learn to make themselves useful in all sorts of ways as soon as they can walk.

While she is cooking the breakfast her husband is busy turning out the cattle—thinking, perhaps, of the porridge, sausages, fried potatoes, scones and treacle, whose appetizing odours are giving the new day a new charm. As in the case of the lumberer, the meal is finished in double-quick time, without any dawdling over empty dishes. Then the farmer goes out to sow the land which he has ploughed, hitching up the horses to the

drill-seeder, or more often, nowadays, using a tractor to draw the seeder.

Having seen her man off to his work and the two boys off to the little prairie school-house about four miles away, the farmer's wife continues her own tasks. She has to milk the cows, and, if she owns a separator, separate the cream. There is the house to be cleaned, there are the breakfast things to be washed up, the beds to be made, and dinner—beef steak, potatoes, stewed apples, scones and syrup—to be cooked by 11.30 for the hungry men.

After washing up the dinner dishes she still has many things to do—such as baking bread, washing and ironing clothes, making jam, and churning butter—that keep her busy till tea-time. Tea is a meal of good tea or coffee, wild strawberry jam, new-laid eggs, golden bannocks and home-made bread; it is nearly as big a meal as dinner, and is taken at 6.30 or 7.30 according to the season. After that she must again wash up, milk the cows, separate the cream, and, perhaps, before she can think of going to bed, put in a little spare time darning and mending the holes that will, somehow, appear in Jack's and Bobbie's breeches.

In spite of the long hours of work the spring days are welcome after the cold winter months. Winter on the prairie is not a very pleasant season, for though there may be a chance to skate or ski, the freezing winds that sweep across the vast,

open spaces make winter sports less common and less enjoyable than in some other parts of Canada.

Even on the prairie, winter has its compensations. Though the days be short and the temperature far below zero, the sky is often a dazzling blue and the air crisp and dry. Christmas and New Year are a season of merry parties. Winter is really the farmer's holiday time, because nothing can then be done on the land.

In many ways the prairie dweller is much better off than he used to be for keeping in touch with the outside world. In recent years motor-cars, or "autos," as they are called, have come into general use. Nearly every farmer has one, and however old and ramshackle it may be, it enables him and his family to go about the country and to meet their neighbours at parties, clubs and village institutes. The telephone is freely used by children as well as grown-ups, and this and the wireless have done much to make farm life less lonely.

In spite of the recreations of winter, there is great rejoicing when spring comes to banish Jack Frost and roll away the carpet of snow. Then the tongues of the chattering streams are loosened and the sap flows swiftly through the trees. The farmer gets busy too, and though he knows that he will have long and toilsome days before his fields are ripe unto harvest, he is glad to be at work again, for it is pleasant after the long spell of winter to see the earth break forth into new life.



By courtesy of the Canadian National Railways

V.—LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

(b) In the Harvest Field

THE chief work on the greater part of the prairies is farming and the chief crop is wheat. Ploughing and sowing are done in much the same way as in England, except that more and bigger machinery is used, because the fields are so large.

Imagine that it is early morning in harvest time and that the land looks like an ocean of gold stretching away for miles and miles. Since before sunrise, tall farm wagons or motor trucks have been driven out to the fields, ready for the day's work, and in the dim light of the dawn their gaunt shapes stand out black against the sky. Beautiful as it all is, the farm-hands have not time to stand and stare either at the first pale hues that tell of the coming of the sun or at the dusky gold of the waving wheat; for the farmer, who pays his men three dollars a day for their work, is naturally anxious to see those dollars earned.

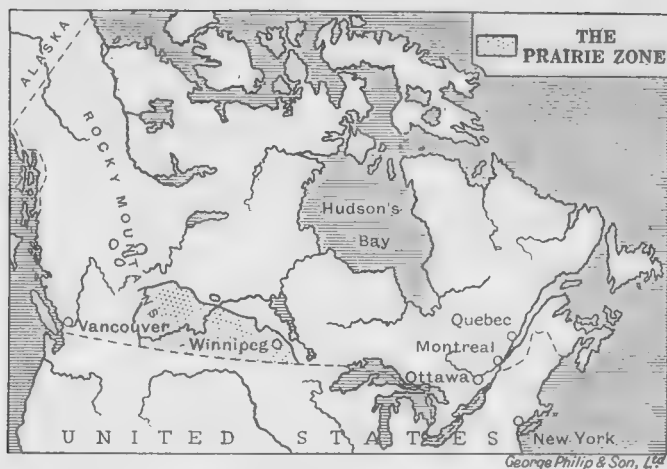
On this farm the crop is being reaped with big machines called "binders," that seem almost as intelligent as men and women. As they are driven through the rippling fields they cut the stalks, bind them into sheaves, and hold the sheaves in their strong steel arms till half a dozen or more are ready to be thrown out.

Behind the binders walk the "stookers," who gather up the sheaves and place them upright in bundles of five or six till the level land is lined with long rows that lie one behind the other, like the crests of some sunlit ocean's waves. Stooking looks easy work to those who have never tried it, but that young Englishman over there, who is just out from the homeland and is doing it for the first time, has quite another story to tell. After a few hours he feels as though he had been

CUTTING GRAIN ON THE PRAIRIES

By courtesy of the Canadian National Railways





MAP OF CANADA SHOWING THE PRAIRIE ZONE

toiling for a day and takes a peep at his watch, ideas of a near dinner running through his mind, to find that it is only half-past eight.

With a half-amused sigh he sets to work again, doggedly following the binder, which is steadily moving over the fertile plain at the rate of about three miles an hour. At first his hands grow red and become blistered and his eyes are sore with the glare of the sun on the wheat. But there is no chance of a rest, except perhaps for a few minutes when some big field is finished; and after an hour or two more he finds that the work is growing easier, because he has now got the knack of it.

After the cutting comes the threshing, when the grain is separated from the straw; the crop is

usually much too large to be stored in barns. The horses are harnessed to the big wagons and driven from stook to stook. A man pitches the stooks into the racks with a fork, and when the wagon is full makes his way to the threshing machine that is standing in one corner of the field.

As a threshing machine costs a great deal of money each farmer does not buy one for himself, but hires one, and till his turn to have the use of it comes round he may have to stack the wheat to prevent the crop from being spoiled by rain. The machines may travel from farm to farm with a small army of workers, who sleep in a conveyance drawn by the same engine that pulls and drives the thresher. When the thresher is running well and everything is going smoothly, it swallows up the stooks so quickly that it takes the men who feed it all their time to keep it supplied, and they are not sorry if something happens to the engine to make it stop and give them a few minutes' breathing space.

In the greedy jaws of this useful monster the blades of wheat are separated from the straw, and out of it come both streams of straw, which are thrown into shining heaps of fine-cut stalks upon the ground, and streams of grain, that go into wagons. As the carts lose their loads the heaps of straw pile up into a great mound, while the wagons grow heavy with bright, clean grain. All the time the smoke from the thresher rises



A THRESHING OUTFIT AT WORK

By courtesy of the Canadian Pacific Railway

skyward like smoke from the funnels of a steamer, and reminds us once more of the description of the prairie as an ocean.

When all the wheat has been threshed the straw is mostly burned, because that is the quickest way to get rid of it ; but some of the mounds near the farm-house may be saved, for the sake of the cattle, who push their way into the straw and find in it shelter and warmth and food when winter comes.

On many farms the crop is harvested by means of wonderful machines called "combines." They are so called because they "combine" the work of reaping and threshing. As they are driven through the fields they not only cut off the ears of wheat but thresh the grain into bags.

In one way or another the crop is reaped and threshed, and the wheat put into wagons or motor lorries, built in the form of large bins.

If the weather has been fine and the roads are dry and hard the wheat will probably be taken straight to the railway. Along the deep-rutted roads that stretch like ribbons of black earth the farmer drives his heavily laden vehicles to the roadside station, where their contents are weighed. Then the wheat is either emptied into great storehouses called "elevators" or loaded straightway into rail-cars, in which it is sent away to be ground into flour or to be exported as grain. If, however, there has been rain and the roads are in worse condition than usual, the wheat may be kept on the farm until they are fit for traffic.

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The sun is gradually sinking in the west and



A "COMBINE" WHICH BOTH CUTS THE GRAIN AND THRESHES IT

By courtesy of the Canadian National Railways



"ELEVATORS" (STOREHOUSES FOR GRAIN) ON THE PRAIRIE

By courtesy of the High Commissioner for Canada

the farmer and his men are thinking of the big supper that is waiting for them in the kitchen. There is something very pleasant about Canadian threshing suppers on the larger and older farms, something that recalls to mind the "harvest homes" that were once so common in many parts of the British Isles. True, the Canadian kitchen has no oak beams and no cosy old-fashioned ingle-nooks, for we are in a country where everything is young, but the feeling about it all is much the same.

Lamps are lit and set on tables covered with a white cloth while the men are "cleaning up" in the wash-house. The meal, rather different from an English one, is that common on the prairie, especially at such times—huge piles of new-baked bread, sweet farm butter, steaming plates of eggs, bacon and potatoes, great dishes of hot new ginger-

bread, and perhaps a huge apple pie fresh from the oven, to be eaten, Yorkshire fashion, with great pieces of cheese.

But the people round the table are not all Englishmen and women. The seats are filled by a mixed company of French Canadians, Britons from all parts of the homeland, Russians, Scandinavians, Finns, and others from various parts of Europe and the United States. For the moment they are all of the brotherhood of the soil, very hungry after their long, hard day in the sun-warmed fields, and chiefly interested in the movements of the farmer's wife and daughters, whose business it is to see that everybody's plate is kept as full as it will hold till the eaters are satisfied.

When supper is over the men turn out again to do a few odd jobs in the yard and see that the horses are made comfortable for the night; the farmer's wife clears the table and replaces the white cloth with a gay red one; and the farmer himself settles down in front of the open fire—for the nights grow chilly in the autumn—to smoke his bedtime pipe and to hear the evening radio concert. As for the young Englishman new to the business, he stumbles into bed, every limb aching with that pleasant weariness that rewards a day's hard work in the open, to fall into a deep and dreamless sleep.



VI.—LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

(c) *A Prairie Fire*

THE Canadian farmer, like all other people, has his share of misfortunes. His crops may be beaten to pulp by hail-storms, or uprooted and whirled away by cyclones. Another terrible enemy is the prairie fire. These prairie fires are the dread of all who work upon the prairies, especially at harvest time, when the grass is so dry that it often turns into hay without being cut. A careless camper who has failed to put out his fire, or has dropped a burning match after lighting his pipe, may start a blaze that means ruin for many who have toiled early and late since the time of the spring seeding.

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Towards the end of a long, hot day in sunny August, two men sat smoking outside the wooden shack that had been their prairie home for the past twelve months. They had reaped their first

harvest, and the acres of golden wheat had given way to fields of stubble, with rows upon rows of stooks.

Suddenly one of them noticed smoke far away in the distance.

"Lot of smoke over there," he remarked, as he pointed his pipe in the direction of the darkened sky.

"Some of those fellows burning off stubble or bush grass perhaps," said his companion.

"Well, if they're burning stubble they must have got in their wheat pretty quickly, that's all I can say," was the reply.

Soon the distant screen of smoke became thicker, and grey clouds began to roll across the western sky, rising higher and higher until they almost shut out the last rays of the setting sun. One of the men stirred uneasily.

"Guess that smoke cloud looks a bit queer," he remarked, as he rose to his feet.

"Think there's any chance of it coming this way?" asked his companion.

"No fear of that," was the reply; "the wind is in the wrong quarter. But it looks bad for some of those fellows farther south. We'd better get a move on and see if we can do anything to help. Just let the stock loose first; they'll be safer in case the wind changes and the fire comes this way."

Without further delay the two men ran for their horses, provided themselves with sticks,



FIGHTING A PRAIRIE FIRE

tied damp grain bags to their saddles, and set off in the direction of the smoke.

After riding south for a mile or two, they met a number of men from other farms around, all hurrying in the same direction. From these they learned that the fire had broken out a mile or more away from the homestead of a recent settler, who had not yet harvested all his crops. It would be impossible to save the wheat, but there was just a chance that the fire might be stopped before it reached his little wooden shack and outhouses.

Presently the crowd of helpers arrived on the edge of the settler's land and saw, stretching far away in front of them, a sea of leaping scarlet tongues of flame. By this time darkness had fallen, but in the neighbourhood of the fire the gloom was lit up by a strange and fearful glare. The figures of men and animals stood out bold and black against the advancing flames ; women, and even children, were fighting with all their strength, and by every means they knew, to beat out the fire before it reached the little mound on which the settler had built his home.

Buckets of water were brought by the children from the well and a near-by stream, and into these the men dipped their grain bags. A long line of helpers, some of whom had ridden for many miles, faced the fire. They knew that they too might have to meet the same peril some day, and they had long since learned one of the first lessons

of the prairie—that when a fire breaks out it is the duty of every one within reach to lend a hand in the fight against death and ruin.

Nothing could be done to save the wheat ; for fire, when it reaches the long, dry stalks, travels almost with the speed of the wind. Near the homestead, however, the grass was short, and it seemed worth while to try to stem the flames with sticks, brooms, wet sacks, or anything else that could be found. Some of the visitors even took off their coats, dipped them in water, and with them beat hurriedly and eagerly at the slowly creeping red line of destruction.

Up and down, wet with perspiration, faces blackened and eyes half blinded with smoke, they tramped and struggled over ground so hot that it burned their feet through the heavy soles of their thick riding boots.

Between the crawling fire line and his little homestead the settler drove his plough, striving with all possible speed and strength to make a fire-guard of bare earth that should call a halt to his enemy. But the ground was uneven and progress slow, and at last the man gave up the attempt as hopeless, bitterly repenting that he had not made this fire-guard weeks before. Leaving his plough, and turning the animals loose to look after themselves, he took off his cap and shirt, dipped them in the water, and joined the line of those who were striving to stem the flames.

For a moment or two victory would seem to be

near at hand ; then, in places where the grass was longer, the fire would suddenly leap ahead ; or, where it appeared to be dead, break out again with fresh violence. It was now within fifty yards of the shack ; all hope had been given up, but the battle never ceased for a single instant. A yard nearer, another yard !

Then suddenly, without any warning, the wind changed, the smoke rolled backwards to the point from which it had come, and a great mass of blackened, smoking earth lay covered with ashes as far as the eye could reach.

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When the two men had once again reached their own homestead they had much to say of the happenings of that fearful night.

“ It was a near shave for that farmer,” remarked one of them, at the same time sorrowfully looking at a hole that the fire had burned in the sole of his riding boot.

“ Yes,” replied his mate. “ If the wind hadn’t changed and driven the fire towards the river, instead of towards the homestead, he wouldn’t now have much left to call his own. Well, I’m off,” he added, as he finished nailing a piece of leather over a hole in his own boot.

“ Where to ? ”

“ Oh, only just to plough a fire-screen. You never know when our turn may come, and I think we’ve been talking long enough about making one. It’s time we did something now.”

VII.—LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES

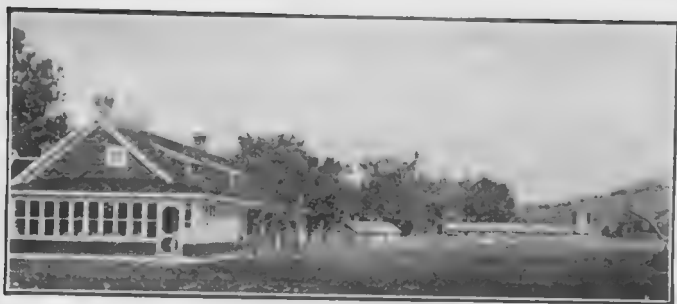
(d) *Ranching*

PARTS of the prairie, in Southern Alberta, are mostly too dry for ordinary farming but are splendid for cattle. Here, on the lee side of the Rocky Mountains, the snowfall is not so heavy as in other parts of the prairie, and cattle can not only live in the open all through the winter, but grow sleek and fat on the dry, brown grasses of the southern plains.

This is the ranching country of Canada, with more than a million cattle, horses and sheep, the land of the cow-boy who sings :

“ I want free life and I want fresh air
And I sigh for the canter after the cattle,
The crack of the whips like shot in the air,
The medley of horns and hoofs and heads
That wars and wrangles and scatters and spreads ;
The green beneath and the blue above,
The dash and danger and life and love.”

Those who have watched cows in England peacefully chewing buttercups in what we think large meadows have little idea of what a ranch in Alberta is really like. It may cover 100,000 acres, carry 8,000 cattle and as many horses, and be undivided from the next ranch by any kind of fence. Instead of fields neatly separated by hedges, miles of grassland stretch away as far as the eye can reach, and great herds of cattle and



THE DUKE OF WINDSOR'S CANADIAN RANCH

By courtesy of the Canadian Pacific Railway

horses can be seen wandering where they please and leading lives almost as free and natural as those of the bison (wrongly called "buffalo") that once roamed across these same wild, open spaces.

Here and there are dotted the ranch-houses, looking very small upon the boundless prairie. Some of them, usually on the sheltered banks of the rivers, are very much like English country-houses and are surrounded by gardens in which English flowers show their gaily coloured blossoms, while others are rough and rather ugly wooden shacks, whose dark outsides give no idea of what may be found inside. Some of these shacks are tastefully and even daintily furnished with rugs, a piano, books, and other pleasant things ; some are untidy and occupied by men who tumble nightly into an unmade bed, feed every day on fried pork and tea, never shave or brush their hair, and seem to live in as much discomfort as if they occupied a stable.

The houses are often miles apart and distant from any town, though railways and motor-cars are banishing much of the former loneliness of the ranch. People have been known to ride twenty-five miles each way every fortnight to fetch their letters, and at one time all supplies were very dear, because they had to be brought by wagon.

Nowadays there is, as a rule, a village within a few miles, with a hall where the ranchers and their friends may gather for a concert or a play, or for a fancy dress ball ; and even if there be no

village near at hand, or neighbours with whom to talk about the weather or the news, there is the wireless that brings into the lonely shack the voices of people from towns and cities far away.

As there are no fences to stop them for hundreds of miles, the cattle stray from one ranch to another, though they are generally to be found within twenty to twenty-five miles from their own headquarters. Whether from far or near, however, they have to be collected from time to time, so that each rancher may have under his eye the cattle belonging to his own range.

The work of collecting the scattered beasts is called a "round-up," and there are enough round-ups in a year to keep the "cow-puncher," as the rancher is called, always busy. There are bull round-ups to separate the bulls from the rest of the herd, beef round-ups to select so many hundred head of cattle to be driven to the station and sent to market, and branding round-ups, when the calves are marked and the sick cows tended and looked after.

The two most important of the round-ups take place in the spring and autumn. That in the spring is chiefly for the purpose of branding the baby calves, who as yet have never left their mothers.

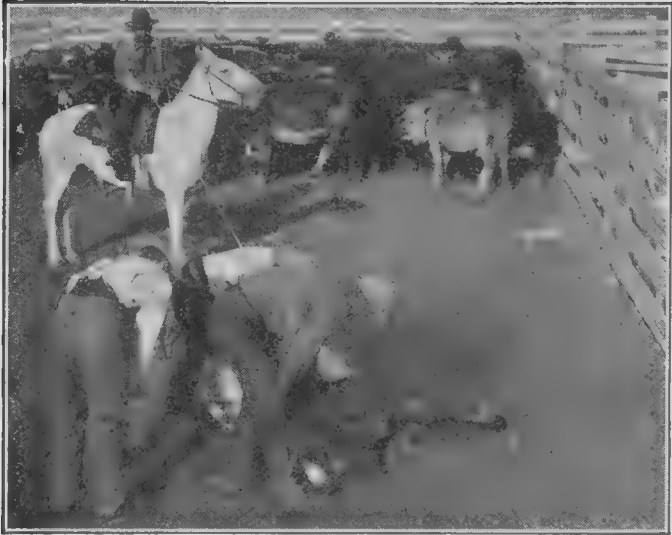
About thirty cow-boys, each with a string of eight or nine horses, assemble under the leadership of a captain, who, like themselves, usually wears over his ordinary trousers a second pair called "chaps," made partly of sheepskin on which

the wool has been left, with the woolly side turned outwards. On his feet are small high-heeled boots, with heavy spurs ; on his head is a broad, flat-rimmed felt hat, with an elastic band passing under his chin ; and round his neck is tied a large red handkerchief.

The " boys " are up before sunrise, and after eating a hearty breakfast scatter in all directions over the plains. As soon as they find any cattle straying about, they ride so as to get outside them and then drive them together into a group. Then they push into the herd and gradually urge the cows and the calves to the outside of the ring, where others are waiting to see that they do not break loose again and escape. The chosen animals are then driven into an enclosed space called a *corral*, and the real fun begins.

The frisky calves dash wildly about, first in one direction and then in another, closely followed by the mounted cow-boys ready with *lassos*—long, thin ropes with a noose at one end. The rope flies out, the noose finds the hind legs of a calf, the well-trained horses hold themselves stiff, and the calf, much to his surprise, finds himself lying upon his side on the ground. Almost before he has had time to think of asking his mother what is the meaning of this, or to say how much he dislikes such rough treatment, a man with a branding-iron rushes up, and, in spite of his struggles, sets the mark of the ranch upon his side.

All the calves are branded with the particular



BRANDING CATTLE

By courtesy of the High Commissioner of Canada

mark of their own ranch, so that at a later round-up, when they have grown up and left their mothers, it will be known to whom they belong. The cow-punchers may be rough, but in their own business they are strictly honest, and it is said that no one ever puts his mark on a calf that is the property of some one else.

If a rancher wants to send some of his cattle away, they are driven into a corral built close to a railway. From a herd of about 400 perhaps 250 will be chosen and driven up a gangway into waiting trucks. Lassos are not used and there is no noise or shouting, lest the beasts be frightened

and stampede. Even talking will sometimes cause them to "mill"; that is, they form a ring, heads at the centre and low down, and tramp round and round like the sails of a windmill, flicking their tails on the outside of the circle. To break up a mill is very difficult, and makes the cattle so restless that it is then no easy matter to drive them into the trucks.

Besides rounding-up and branding cattle the cow-boy has to break in young horses, or "broncos." The colts are fed for the first winter only, after which they are allowed to run wild for two or three years till they are ready to be sold.

"Bronco-busting," as the work of breaking-in the colts is called, is always thrilling. In former days the methods were so violent that both men and horses were often seriously hurt. First the bronco was lassoed. If the noose encircled its forelegs it was jerked to the ground; if the noose dropped over its neck it strained against the rope till it fell, half-choked.

Once on the ground it was quickly seized and bridled, the bridle being so arranged that pressure tightened the thongs round the nostrils till the colt could scarcely breathe. Then it was blindfolded and allowed to rise. Trembling and sweating after the struggle, and bewildered by the darkness, it stood long enough for the great heavy saddle to be thrown across its back, though several attempts had to be made before the girths were fastened.

When all was secure, the cow-boy leaped into the saddle, the bandage was stripped from the colt's eyes, and a terrific struggle began between horse and rider.

The bronco, always wild, and now maddened by fear and rage and pain, kicked and squealed, bucked and bit, trying in every way to rid itself of its burden, while the man flogged and spurred unmercifully.

This went on till the man was thrown or the colt tired out, and the struggle was renewed day after day till the spirit of the wild young thing was conquered. "Bronco-

busting" was a good name, for at the end the bronco was often "busted," while the "busters" themselves could not stand the strain of the work for long. Nowadays wiser methods are used, with benefit to both horse and man.



"BRONCO-BUSTING"

From Carson's "Ranching, Sport and Travel," by courtesy of Messrs. Ernest Benn



DRYING AND MENDING NETS

By courtesy of the Agent-General for British Columbia

VIII.—LIFE ON THE COAST

Salmon-Fishing in British Columbia

The sea's our field of harvest,
Its scaly tribes our grain ;
We'll reap the teeming waters
As at home they reap the plain ! *

THERE is an old story which says that at a certain season of the year there are so many salmon in the great lakes and rivers of British Columbia that you can cross from one bank to the other, without wetting your feet, by walking on their silvery backs. Though this quaint tale is certainly

* "The Fishermen" (Whittier).

not true, it could never have been told had there not been, in the many waters of the country, millions of these beautifully marked fish.

Salmon-fishing is one of the chief out-door sports and also one of the most important of the industries of British Columbia. As a sport it draws men to lonely places in the mountains, where the unbroken surface of some far-stretching lake mirrors the dark pines that stand, like sentinels, to guard the quiet world of wood and water. It is not, however, the life of the angler catching salmon for fun, but the life of the fishermen catching them for sale, with which this chapter deals.

In late summer and early autumn, different kinds of salmon come up from the sea to lay their eggs in the rivers. They wriggle and heave their way upstream till the water seems almost solid with them, and hundreds upon hundreds are jostled and pushed out on to the banks, where they die and create a most horrible stench.

They meet so many enemies in their course from the sea to the river, and from the river back to the sea, that it is wonderful that there are any salmon left alive. They are arrested in giant traps and caught by enormous nets, which in some places make a line from shore to shore and touch bottom at the mouths of many of the rivers. Seals, too, follow the nets, seize the salmon, bite out what they think are the tit-bits, and let the rest fall to the bottom of the sea.

The salmon that escape the traps and the nets have still to dodge their human foes, who are waiting for them at many points along the banks of the river. As soon as the eggs are laid they are attacked by trout, and as soon as the young salmon are hatched there are other fish waiting to feed on them while they are small and tender. If they are spared to grow large enough to return to the sea they find the mouth of every river alive with millions of trout and chub, who know what a dainty meal they make.

A large part of the fishermen are Japanese; there are also many Indians, and Whites of all nations. Many of them live in small houses on the banks of the rivers, or on small ranches where they farm when they are not fishing.

About June the Indians arrive in long, black canoes, which carry men, women and children, dogs, fowls and tents. Their faces are thickly smeared with red and black paint, not for ornament but to protect them from the sun. In a very short while up go tents and huts, beds and bedding are landed, fires are lit, and a whole encampment is housed on shore. Fires burn, dogs bark, fowls cackle, and the camp looks as if it had been there and meant to stay there for years. The night is enlivened by singing and howling, the beating of music out of pans and kettles, and dancing in the smoke and the gloom.

As soon as the fishing begins, each man takes his place in a boat, nowadays usually a motor-

boat. Sometimes a man will risk going alone, but usually there are two men to each boat, one to take charge of it and the other to look after the net.

Handling the net is hard work, for it is often 300 yards long, and not only must it be hauled, but the salmon have to be killed by hitting each one a sharp blow on the head with a stick. The work goes on all through the long night-watches, and it sometimes happens that the fishermen remain for a week at a time in the narrow space of a small boat, where they work and sleep and cook their food on a small oil-stove.

The fishing fleet makes a pretty scene in the



HAULING IN THE NET

By courtesy of the Agent-General for British Columbia



SALMON FISHING BOATS

By courtesy of the Agent-General for British Columbia

early evening, when every ripple is dyed scarlet and orange and green with the last rays of the sun as it dips below the horizon. Boats are scattered everywhere, and long lines of floats stretch across the surface, while the weird strains of some Indian song come floating in from the distance, telling how the lonely crew is trying to pass the time of waiting.

All through the night, little twinkling lanterns sparkle and dance in the darkness, shedding their quivering light in thin ribbons of gold on the restless surface of the water. At daybreak little steam-tugs drag to the landing-stages great boats, piled high with fish, whose bodies in the sunlit

morn shine like so many bars of polished silver. The landing-stages have been washed clean and spread with a carpet of fir branches ; these also have been under the hose, and on to them the rich freight, tossed by forks, falls *plunk, plunk*, as it is piled higher and higher. Presently the checker is up to his thighs in fish and his long rubber boots are hidden in the slippery mass. The hose is turned on again, the water splashes, the silver sparkles, and soon the first fish are on their way to the cannery.

These canneries, which line the banks of the river, are as ugly outside as they are clean within. They are, in fact, so clean that it is said a man might eat his breakfast off the floor. Very little of the work of preparing the fish is now done by hand ; instead, a wonderful machine called the Iron Chink (Chinaman) is employed.

Into the mouth of the Chink go salmon at the rate of a hundred a minute ; they come out at the same rate, with their heads, tails, fins and insides gone, and what is left washed clean by jets of water. They are immediately shot along a carrier that takes them to tubs of salt water, where they are scrubbed, inside and out, by Indian women, and then passed to another big machine where circular knives cut them into slices, each of the right size to fill one can.

Next comes the work of packing the salmon. From the slicing machine they are taken to tables, where deft-fingered women, their heads tied up



A SALMON CANNERY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By courtesy of the Royal Canadian Air Force

in gaudy handkerchiefs, sing as they swiftly pack the slices into the tins, or cans, as they are called—hence the name “canneries.” Then the cans, holding their pink-fleshed “steaks,” are carried in one long, silvery procession, by a travelling belt, to a machine that puts on the lids at the rate of 150 a minute. Another machine welds on the lids, and yet another solders them firmly down.

The soldered cans, stacked on large trays, are sunk under water which has been heated nearly to boiling-point. This is in order to find out if they are truly air-tight. If there are any holes in the tin the air inside escapes and rises

in bubbles from the vent, thus showing exactly where the fault lies. Thereupon the faulty cans are lifted out of the water and sent back to the soldering machine.

The faultless cans are also removed and are placed in a steam-box, where they are heated to over boiling-point for about half an hour. Then a tiny hole is made in the lid of each, to allow the steam inside the cans to escape. Quickly the hole is closed again with a drop of solder, and once more the cans are heated to a high temperature for about an hour.

All this heating serves a double purpose: it not only cooks the salmon thoroughly and softens the bones, but destroys any germs which would make the fish rotten. As the cans are air-tight no more germs can enter from outside, and so the contents remain fresh and good to eat.

When the cooking is finished the cans are varnished and labelled, and are ready to be sent to market.

At the end of the season, from September to October, big steamers call at the canneries to take away the millions of tins for which the people of many countries are waiting. All is not yet over. The men who have caught the fish have still to receive their wages. As there is no more work everybody wants to be off at once, and the manager of the cannery and his clerks have to make up their accounts and pay their debts in the face of a mob of Indians, Japanese

and Whites, crowding into the office, bawling and shouting, each wanting to be attended to before anybody else. If the manager should sleep beyond sunrise, the mob will be under his window at an early hour, telling him to rise and get on with his business. He knows no peace till the last man has left the place and is on the way back to his home or the store.

The stores, which sell all kinds of things, attract the Indians in large numbers. Men and women wander about, buying first one thing and then another, till they have heaped together enough goods to fill the canoe. They do not seem to mind very much what they buy. Their chief idea is to spend all their money before they go back to their villages. Flour, clothes, saddles, bridles, guns, ploughs, even coffins and grave-stones, all find ready purchasers. If a man has any money left after his canoe is filled he will probably give a *potlach*—a kind of party which is a mixture of a free lunch and a scramble for blankets.

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For those who are fond of figures it may be stated that in 1932 the canneries of British Columbia produced 1,081,031 cases of tinned salmon, and for those who would like to work out the weight of fish it may be added that every case contained forty-eight tins, each of which held one pound of salmon. In 1930 the output was 2,321,000 cases—a record up to that time.



IX.—LIFE AMONG THE “MOUNTIES”

(The Royal Canadian Mounted Police)

Our mission is to plant the rule
Of Britain's freedom here,
Restrain the lawless savage, and
Protect the pioneer ;
And 'tis a proud and daring trust
To hold these vast domains
With but three hundred mounted men,
The Riders of the Plains.

SINCE the above lines were written the number of these red-coated “Riders of the Plains” has been increased to over two thousand, but their mission is just the same—to keep unruly people in order and protect those who live in the lonely parts of Canada, far away from the towns. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are known all over the country as a band of fearless men who will risk their lives, at any time, to see that the law is kept and that justice is done to white man and Indian alike. They often lead lives almost as lonely as those of the trappers, and may have work



A TROOPER OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

By courtesy of the Canadian Pacific Railway

to do which for weeks upon weeks will take them out of sight of their own countrymen, sometimes out of sight of any human being at all.

In the past, as in the present, they defended the settler, guarded the men who were building the railways, put down riots, fought prairie fires, and hunted for lost children. There is scarcely anything that the "Mounties," as they are called, have not done; and their work is not yet over, for there are still tens of thousands of square miles of Canada where the population is very scattered, and where police are sometimes needed because some of the people have broken the law. So

clever and brave, so trustworthy and untiring are these Riders of the Plains, that few crimes go unpunished and few criminals escape, no matter how far the wrong-doers flee or how deserted the places where they seek to hide.

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A group of men was seated round the big, warm stove in the dining-room of the barracks of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Ottawa. They had just finished a very good dinner, and, as is often the case at such times, they began to tell each other stories, especially of their own doings in the past.

"Things are very different now from what they were when I first joined the Force," said one veteran, as he knocked the ashes out of his well-worn pipe. "They've even changed our name. I like the old one better—'North-West Mounted Police'—and for the life of me I can't get out of the habit of using it; sounds more natural to me somehow. Then, nowadays, everybody on the prairie is so settled and law-abiding that half the time there isn't any need to keep anybody in order any more. The old days on the plains are something to remember and talk about, I can tell you. What with people trying to sell liquor to the Indians, and Indians trying to steal cattle, and people quarrelling and fighting, we hadn't much time to sit round a stove looking at each other's pretty uniforms."

"Talking about selling liquor," continued

another, "I remember an amusing little affair that happened soon after I put on the pretty uniform you're talking about. I was a smart young corporal then and didn't leave much to chance. One evening when I was out with my patrol, I noticed some wagon tracks, and as I was always on the look-out for a little excitement I followed them to see where they were going. Presently I saw that the tracks were beginning to grow fainter, and being a smart lad—you needn't laugh, I was—I saw that if the trail was fainter the load must be lighter, and I wanted to know what had become of the load. Clever, wasn't it ?

" Well, I searched the ground round about the spot where the trail was faintest, and there I found five ten-gallon kegs of whisky, sitting as cosily as you please at the bottom of a bank, just out of sight. I left them there and rode back to camp, where whom should I meet but old ' Red ' McKay with a horse and an empty wagon. After we had all had supper together, the ginger-headed Scottie hitched his horse to the wagon and drove off into the mist, while I went back to the whisky kegs and sat by them all night, like a mother watching a baby.

" Early next morning along came ' Red ' with his wagon, and began to move the kegs. I waited till he had loaded all but one of them and was just cuddling the last one lovingly in his arms, when out I popped, quick, sharp, just like a Jack-in-the-box. You should have seen McKay's



face ! In his surprise he dropped the keg on his toe and let off a yell like that of an Indian on the war-path. Of course, I had completely spoiled his game, and there was nothing left for him to do but drive me and the kegs and the wagon back into Lethbridge, where we took the whisky from him and made him pay a heavy fine into the bargain."

"You can thank your stars that you went after McKay on a quiet summer night," added another member of the Force; "it's quite a different tale sometimes. A good deal depends on weather. Do you remember that young tender-foot, Bob Hornsey ? He joined us at a time when we were having such a lot of trouble because of Indians stealing cattle, and a few of us were sent to a small camp on Little Bow, about twenty

miles from Lethbridge. The settlers were afraid that they would lose their beasts, and it was our business to protect them and keep off the thieves. Opposite Little Bow there was a ford over the river, which was easily crossed when the water was low, but when we were down there the river was in flood and was running like a mill-race.

"One day we sent young Hornsey back to headquarters to report what we were doing, and we told him on no account to try to use the ford, but to go round by another and much longer way. He didn't like it, because it added ten miles each way to his journey, but he did as he was told, arrived safely at Lethbridge and delivered his message. Soon after he had started on the return journey he lost his way, and he didn't quite know what to do. He was afraid to return to the barracks at Lethbridge for fear the older men there would



make fun of him, so he just plunged on straight ahead. At last, quite by accident, he found himself at the ford and made up his mind to swim across."

"What happened to him?" asked the sergeant.

"Drowned, of course. We made up a search party when he didn't return, and found his body five miles away down the river. Sad business that was. Most promising youngster, was Hornsey."

The speaker stopped, and for a moment or two there was silence round the stove. Many of the older men were thinking of old comrades of their own who had lost their lives in floods, snows and storms, while carrying out their duties in the wilds.

At last a very quiet-looking boy remarked, "You talk a good deal about the old days on the prairie, but for adventure and hardship I don't think anything could beat what is going on day after day, year after year, up in the Arctic with the farthest patrol. It's pretty rough! Mosquitoes and black flies to drive you mad in the summer; snow and ice and bitter cold in the winter, with biting winds that whistle through your bones and freeze the hair of your dogs as they push through the drifts. It's a hard life but a grand one.

"I was crossing a creek one day when I suddenly tripped and fell on the ice. My left arm went through, up to the elbow; it didn't stay long in the water and I wasn't far from camp, but by the time I got back my left hand seemed frozen solid and was as white and hard as marble. I shall never forget it. My chums worked away

at it, rubbing the hand and arm for hours, till at last they managed to set the blood flowing again ; but my fingers turned black and green, and it was months before they were properly healed."

"Was that why they sent you back here ?" asked some one.

"No," replied the young man from the north ; "I came down here for a bit of a rest. You see, I had just had a pretty tiring job, all because a bad Indian had gone away and left his children behind to be devoured by wolves. They told me to find him and take him prisoner, and I had to go alone. I tracked him for weeks and weeks, but I got him at last."

"How far did you track him ?"

"For a thousand miles from Edmonton. When I caught him I put the handcuffs on him and began to think how I was to get him and myself back alive. I tied him up and left him while I went to a little camp of trappers for a canoe. Then I bundled the Indian into the canoe and paddled him down the river for 600 miles."

"And after that ?"

"Well, after that we walked."

"How far ?"

"Oh, for about as far again. But I didn't lose him, and he's very sorry now that he left his kiddies to the wolves."

